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WHITE HOUSE FOR OSTP

HHS FOR OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, OFFICE OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (STEIGER)

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SUBJECT: Canadians Pleased with President's AIDS
Initiative

Ref. SECSTATE 146483

Summary and Action Request

1. This cable contains an action request (para.9).

2. ESTH Counselor and ESTH Specialist called on Ed Aiston, Director General for International Affairs, and Martin Methot, his deputy, in the Canadian Health Ministry to discuss the President's AIDS initiative. Aiston said the Canadian Government is very pleased with the new USG funding to fight HIV/AIDS, and he praised the leadership shown by the U.S. on this issue. Aiston and Methot asked whether the new AIDS/HIV funds will have any conditions on their disbursement, such as a requirement for matching funds from host governments or other sources. Canadian financial commitments to the global fight against AIDS/HIV amount to C\$470 million (about US\$347 million) between 2000 and 2005. The Canadian federal budget of February 2003 indicates an 8 percent increase in the International Assistance budget, and it is likely that AIDS/HIV funding will receive a boost over the coming few years from this source. Aiston said that Secretary Thompson's announcement of the new AIDS funding at the recent World Health Assembly, along with the surprise USG support for the adoption of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, set the right tone for the recent World Health Assembly and contributed significantly to its success. End Summary.

Canadians very pleased with USG AIDS Initiatives

3. Ed Aiston, Director General of International Affairs at Health Canada was effusive in his praise for the new USG funding initiative signed into law by the President on May 27th. Aiston noted that Secretary Thompson's announcement of the new funds, made at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, was "very, very, very well-received".

4. Aiston, along with Martin Methot, Director of the International Health Division at Health Canada posed some questions to the EST Counselor and ESTH Specialist regarding the new funds. Specifically, Aiston and Methot inquired whether USG funding for AIDS programs will require matching funds from other donors or whether any other conditions may apply. Methot also asked whether U.S. programs for AIDS included funds for development of an AIDS vaccine. Post would appreciate any clarification that WASHDC agencies could provide on these two questions. See para.8.

5. Aiston took the opportunity of the meeting with Emboffs, to note that Secretary Thompson's support for the adoption of the FCTC was extremely well-received by the assembled Health Ministers at the WHA. He praised the Secretary's actions as a very strong example of leadership, which generated enormous goodwill and helped create a very positive tone for the Assembly. Aiston remarked also that Secretary Thompson's statement on the need for a strong and robust Global Public Health Surveillance system was an idea that was very well received at the WHA, and that Canada is eager to learn more detail about this proposal.

Canadian Funding for Global fight against AIDS

6. In the global fight against AIDS, Canada's contribution, on a per capita basis, is significant. Between 2000 and 2005 the GoC will invest C\$270 million (about US\$198 million) in the global fight against

AIDS, via the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Canadian equivalent of USAID. CIDA programs focus on working with community groups and local organizations to provide reproductive health services, training, education and counseling. (CIDA often contracts with Health Canada to execute their programs, especially those involving capacity building because Health Canada has 75 to 100 staff members with clinical and public health expertise pertaining to HIV/AIDS, whereas CIDA has only a small policy planning staff managing the AIDS/HIV file.) Methot told Embassy officers that Canadian AIDS funds support programs in India, China, Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and the Caribbean.

17. In addition, Canada has committed C\$150 million (about US\$110 million) to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The GoC has also committed C\$50 million (about US\$37 million) to the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. Canadian funds have been used to build labs in Kenya and Uganda, with additional labs planned for Rwanda, Zambia and Cameroon.

18. Aiston noted to Emboffs that the GoC Budget of February 18th, 2003 indicated that the federal government plans to increase Canada's International Assistance budget by 8 per cent in FY2003-2004 and again in FY 2004-05, this translates into an increase of C\$1.4 billion (about US\$1 billion). Aiston anticipates that the GoC's AIDS funding will be augmented as a result, but no details are yet available. Emboffs will be meeting with officials from CIDA on June 19 to discuss CIDA's role in GoC AIDS/HIV activities, and will seek their views on how much of the new International Assistance funding will be directed toward AIDS/HIV programs.

Action Request

19. Action request: Post would appreciate clarification on whether under the President's initiative on AIDS, the U.S. will require matching funds from other donors or whether any other forms of conditionality may apply to disbursement of the funds. Canadian officials are also interested in knowing to what extent the U.S. provides funding for the AIDS vaccine initiative. Response may be sent by email to ESTH Counselor Curt Stone at stonec@state.gov or to ESTH Specialist Locklear at locklear1@state.gov.

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